

WORDPLAY MINIATURES

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In this article, we introduce Word Ways readers to the wordplay miniature -- a special form of the familiar crossword puzzle. In the title, the term miniature refers to its size; all puzzles presented below are square arrays consisting of five horizontal five-letter words intersected by five vertical five-letter words. (Because of the simplicity of this array, we have deemed it unnecessary to supply the puzzler with a grid of squares to be filled in for each puzzle; a blank sheet of paper should be adequate.)

Wordplay, the other half of the title, requires considerably more explanation. In the usual crossword puzzle, the clue for a word is a synonym or short definition. In contrast, words can be defined in terms of their visual or aural peculiarities (for example, palindromes or homonyms) or in relation to other words that they resemble (for example, transposals or deletions).

For the benefit of the newcomer, we briefly define wordplay-oriented terms that he will encounter in the puzzle definitions:

Palindrome - a word spelled the same backward as forward
(ROTOR)

Reversal - a word which, spelled backward, results in a different word (RECAP to PACER)

Transposal (transposition) - a word formed by rearranging the letters of another word (EDGER to GREED)

Transaddition - a transposal in which a letter has been added
(DEER to EDGER)

Transdeletion - a transposal in which a letter has been subtracted
(GEARED to EDGER)

Letter Deletion (letter subtraction) - a word formed by removing a letter from another word (LOUVER to LOVER)

Curtailment - a letter deletion in which the last letter is removed
(SINGER to SINGE)

Beheadment - a letter deletion in which the first letter is removed
(STRIPE to TRIPE)

Letter Addition - a word formed by adding a letter to another word (BEAN to BEGAN)

Letter Change - a word formed when one of the letters of a word is replaced by another (CHEAT to CLEAT)

Letter Shift - a word formed by shifting each letter in a word the

same number of alphabetic steps (CHEER to JOLLY, 7 steps)

Homonym - a word having the same pronunciation as another word, but spelled differently (CITE and SIGHT)

Heteronym - a word having the same spelling as another word, but pronounced differently (TARRY, resembling tar, and TARRY, to linger)

Charade - a word which can be divided into two or more component words (LOTUS to LOT, US)

Words can be buried in sentences. Examine the following sentence carefully: the men downed German oreads. You will find that the sentence includes eight five-letter buried words: theme, he-men, emend, endow, owned, edger, manor, and reads.

All of the tricks exemplified above have been used in the miniature crosswords that follow, as have others that need no advance explanation. To make the problem more challenging, we have often replaced a word with its definition. To illustrate, instead of describing LEAST as a transpositional of TALES, we can equally well define it as a transposition of "stories". Words in quotation marks are always definitions taking the place of more direct but also more revealing words.

In the case of charades, we have invariably used definitions or paraphrases to replace the individual words. Such definitions or paraphrases are followed by the notation (2 words) or (3 words) to indicate into how many short words we have chopped the original five-letter word. When you encounter a seemingly ridiculous "sentence" clue not followed by such a notation, you will be safe in assuming that you are to look for a buried word.

PUZZLE 1

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Across | 1. a palindrome |
| | 2. transposition of LEONA |
| | 3. Latin for "104 and" |
| | 4. letter addition on "having capability" |
| | 5. transdeletion of WRITES |
| Down | 1. the first letter is the last one turned upside down; those in between comprise a palindrome |
| | 2. transaddition on BAIL |
| | 3. letter subtraction on "herd or flock" |
| | 4. reversal of a form of the name HELEN |
| | 5. the axe became terrible at one stop, Earl |

PUZZLE 2

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Across | 1. transpositional of SLAGS |
| | 2. transpositional of "the Roman emperor preceding Trajan" |
| | 3. an <u>episode</u> free of existence |
| | 4. all letters of this word are in the first third of the alphabet |
| | 5. transdeletion of DEALER |

- Down
1. letter change on "any field or piece of land"
 2. transaddition on PLEA
 3. letter addition on "very desirous, eager"
 4. transposition of EDGES
 5. letter shift away from TOFFS

PUZZLE 3

- Across
1. transdeletion of STRUCK
 2. prefix one letter to this one-syllable word, and you have a three-syllable city name
 3. reversal of Italian for "rectum"
 4. a weatherman's heart
 5. transposal of 4 Down
- Down
1. it is sometimes followed by E
 2. transposition of HATER
 3. letter deletion of "a kind of golf club"
 4. transposal of 5 Across
 5. transaddition on STEM

PUZZLE 4

- Across
1. transaddition on BOTH
 2. homonym of "a female sandpiper"
 3. transposal of REVEL
 4. transposition of German for "father"
 5. wigwam number 8
- Down
1. transdeletion of TARGET
 2. letter change on HEAVE
 3. transaddition upon NEAR
 4. above the 16th consonant
 5. homonym for the antonym of "death"

PUZZLE 5

- Across
1. transposal of PILAR
 2. reversal of two-word term meaning "a slender, pointed, metal fastener"
 3. bring a message, St. Erse
 4. the self dozed (2 words)
 5. letter addition on "specks, spots, or points"
- Down
1. transaddition on DIAL
 2. a famous ratio: a number (3 words)
 3. reversal of "a county seat in southeastern Colorado"
 4. transdeletion of SPINET
 5. transposal of SLATS

PUZZLE 6

- Across
1. transposal of "mistakes, blunders"
 2. transposal of "mother-of-pearl"
 3. transposal of "strong displeasure"
 4. transposal of "native of Yugoslavia"
 5. transposal of "actions"
- Down
1. transposal of "complains, finds fault"
 2. transposal of "to return to a previous state or level"
 3. transposal of "small mountain pools or lakes"
 4. transposal of "hybrid between a lion and a tiger"
 5. transposal of "dark grayish blue"

PUZZLE 7

- Across
1. letter change on "caisson disease"
 2. transaddition on NODE
 3. the axe became terrible at one stop, Earl
 4. homonym of "a large, swelling wave"
 5. transdeletion of STATER
- Down
1. exist like the voiceless alveolar stop (3 words)
 2. centers: if you're after one, take the one here
 3. transposition of OARED
 4. transposal of GONAD
 5. homonym of "a number of connected rooms"

PUZZLE 8

- Across
1. transdeletion of "beyond normal comprehension"
 2. curtailment of "foam formed in sweating"
 3. beheadment of "a choking cloud of dust or smoke"
 4. a heteronym: two noun plurals, differing in pronunciation and meaning
 5. homonym of "had intercourse with a prostitute"
- Down
1. letter addition on "reluctant, unwilling"
 2. sight rhyme or eye rhyme for "a terrace for outdoor eating or lounging"
 3. transposal of "into that place"
 4. transdeletion of "the name of one of Santa's reindeer"
 5. transposal of "to direct one's way or course"

PUZZLE 9

- Across
1. homonym of "a country or region"
 2. transposal of "to acquire knowledge"
 3. a word formerly spelled with three consecutive U's
 4. curtailment of "barest, sheerest"
 5. beheadment of "most skillful"

- Down
1. curtailment of "cheap, shabby"
 2. a palindrome
 3. transdeletion of "bearlike"
 4. transposition of "a girl's first name"
 5. beheadment of "a Soviet administrative division"

PUZZLE 10

- Across
1. a heteronym: the present tense of one verb, the past tense of another verb
 2. one of the two shortest English words using three canine letters
 3. a heteronym: a verb and a noun
 4. transaddition on SIRE
 5. transposal of DUSTS

- Down
1. homonym of "articles of commerce, goods"
 2. transdeletion of BISTRO
 3. one of the two shortest English words using the least common regular vowel three times
 4. transposition of French for "plumb line"
 5. letter deletion on "constraint by force or fear"

PUZZLE 11

- Across
1. transposal of "a long-plumed heron"
 2. letter change on LOVER
 3. an item offered for sale (2 words)
 4. a singular noun in one sense, a plural noun in another
 5. transdeletion of NESTLE

- Down
1. you can add two letters to this word without changing either meaning or pronunciation
 2. transposition of "to appear dark and threatening"
 3. Eve and Adam (2 words)
 4. a common word using only one consonant
 5. transaddition upon RATE

PUZZLE 12

- Across
1. transposal of German for "dolphin"
 2. transposal of German for "bile"
 3. transposal of German for "ladies"
 4. transposal of German for "seed"
 5. transposal of German for "harvest"

- Down
1. transposal of German for "rocky ledge"
 2. transposal of German for "to paint"
 3. transposal of German for "seaweeds"
 4. transposal of German for "sands"
 5. transposal of German for "leather"